

DRUM FUN!

Musical Games for Groups



VIDEO
enhanced

Drum Fun! - Musical Games for Groups

-KALANI DAS

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First Edition

First Published in 2012

ISBN 978-0-9883639-0-8

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Introduction

This is a resource for anyone who works with groups. The activities are easy to present and accessible to groups of all kinds. Video clips show each game being played by the participants. See the Drum Fun! 2 DVD set to watch Kalani explain and present each game from the beginning.



Forward

The activities and games contained in this book are some of my favorite time-tested, music-based experiences that I return to often for one simple reason - they work!

After presenting hundreds of events for groups of all shapes and sizes, I have found the value of simple games as a way to free the mind from the burden of having to learn massive amounts of material before one can play music. While I strongly believe in and advocate for quality music education, and relish opportunities to learn and perform traditional music with experienced players, there is a time and a place for different types of experiences. Sometimes, a game is just right for the occasion.

In addition to **traditional drumming**, I have facilitated hundreds of drum circles and jam sessions for a wide variety of people. I enjoy improvised music-making tremendously and believe in the process and value of a co-created musical experience, but there are times when a **drum circle** may not be the right type of experience for a group. They might need more structure and guidance in order to fully “plug-in” to the experience and feel comfortable.

What makes a musical game different from traditional drumming or a drum circle?

In traditional drumming, there is an educational process that takes place before the experience of music-making. Players learn about instruments, techniques, rhythms, forms, and traditions. There is often a teacher-student relationship between players and sometimes there are levels of competency that must be reached before certain instruments are played or pieces are performed. People who dedicate their time to traditional drumming often do so with a view towards studying music and culture, rehearsing together, and frequently with the ultimate goal of performing for audiences and possibly making a recording.

In a drum circle, participants create an improvised musical expression that is based on their collective impulses, expressive needs, and technical abilities. There is no goal of musical education, though some learning may take place through osmosis. There is no leader, although there are often some in the group who

help guide the music and provide support. It is always an in-the-moment creation that reflects the current state of the collective. The activities in a drum circle are not being re-created from “recipes” or dictated by an individual. The main goal is to create music that is a collective expression and primarily of community value. A drum circle is a spontaneous communal event created and enjoyed in the moment. There is no rehearsing and certainly no performance. It is something that is done by and for the people participating.

A musical game is a structured interaction that is characterized by a set of “play rules.” Play rules are any criteria that sets forth arrangements, specifies ways of interacting, or limits interactions in some way. A game is not something to be re-created, like a piece of traditional or composed music. Nor is it an improvised jam session, like a drum circle. A game is something that is played out by the participants, left largely to chance, and always welcoming the novel. A game may be modified, refined, and “massaged” in the moment to make it more useful or appropriate for the players. Think back to when you were a child, playing games with your friends. How often did someone change the rules? These games are no different. So please, use them as starting points and change the rules, add your own touches, and help your participants make them their own.

Although there are clear differences between traditional drumming, drum circles, and musical games, there is no reason you cannot combine them within a session. I do it all the time. However, as a presenter, it’s important to know the difference between these three types of community drumming experiences because each has different qualities, criteria, and goals. These are just three of many types of community drumming. To see a complete list, visit playsinglaugh.com or kalanimusic.com.

Preparation

The Environment

Choosing and arranging the play environment is as important a part of the process as selecting your instruments and outlining your session. Environmental features include: the type and size of your play space, lighting sources, structural logistical features (e.g., room size, ceiling height, access, permanent and unmovable features, etc.), potential distractions from activities outside of the play space, and items that are in the space, but not to be used during your session (e.g., desks, boxes, stands, etc.) Do your best to clear items that you will not be using and create a pleasing and functional environment for your guests.

The Instruments

Having the instruments ready to be played will help your session get off to a smooth start. This means unpacking items that are inside cases and bags, pairing sticks and mallets with their associated instruments (or at least making them readily available), and presenting the instruments in a way that facilitates their distribution and collection. Check instruments for damage and breakage. A splinted stick or sharp metal edge is better discovered by you than by one of your participants. No instruments? No problem! All DRUM FUN! activities can be played using either found sounds (e.g., yard and garden tools, office supplies, cooking tools, etc.), or body percussion sounds & voices.

Your Participants

Your session begins as soon as your participants enter the play space. Your role as a teacher, therapist or facilitator is to bring everyone into this safe and supportive environment, helping them to feel welcome, included, and connected. Take note of the affective state (a person's apparent mood, based on facial expressions and body language) of your participants as they enter the play space. You may need to make a last-minute change based upon what you observe. Choose an appropriate strategy to meet the above goals in ways that work for everyone.

If someone has a physical disability or limitation, whether long or short-term, this activity can bring

attention to that condition and even conjure up undesirable feelings from past trauma. Be mindful of this as you and your participants engage in physical activities that could leave some people feeling left out or frustrated.

Check in with individuals who might need to adapt to physical activities before the session begins and give them the chance to consider how they might want to participate.

Ready to Play

The term “ready to play” means that everyone in the group has any needed instruments as well as any necessary implements (i.e., sticks, mallets, stands, holders). It also means that everyone has put away their personal items, gotten ready to begin, and become focused on the goals of the group.

Segues

Begin with the End in Mind

What will people likely be doing at the end of the first activity? (Where will they be? Will they be holding instruments? Will they be in a circle or spread out? Will they be standing or sitting? What is the energy level likely to be?) What happens at the beginning of the second activity? What needs to happen to bridge the gap between the two? The transition between activities is called a segue and each segue is an important part of your overall program.

Logistically speaking, you may have to take up or put aside instruments and other extra-musical materials (e.g., scarves, art making supplies, and other manipulatives). As best you can, plan for this as part of your overall session. Having a place to set down instruments as part of an activity will help keep the energy flowing and make your segues seamless.

Musically speaking, you can look for ways to integrate and splice activities that share musical material or modalities (e.g., movement, vocalizing, instrumental play, etc.). Sequencing your games and activities is partially about building from basic to more complex forms of musical expression, or building a learning process that focuses on certain skills or concepts. It's important to keep in mind that it's also about connecting activities to keep the flow moving. When sequencing your activities into a session, keep all these factors in mind to turn transitions into segues.

From an interpersonal perspective, segues can serve as bonding and sharing time. For example, you can end one activity with a short pairing or small group assignment, such as, "Find a partner and take two minutes to think of six more reasons to do what we just did! When we come back, have an instrument in your hand, ready to walk and play at the same time." This short task offers multiple opportunities for collaboration and bonding between participants. Short bursts of sharing can help serve as segues, but more importantly, they serve to unite and inspire participants through self-expression, taking risks, and eliciting feelings of empathy as participants find their commonalities.

The 1-5-15 Strategy

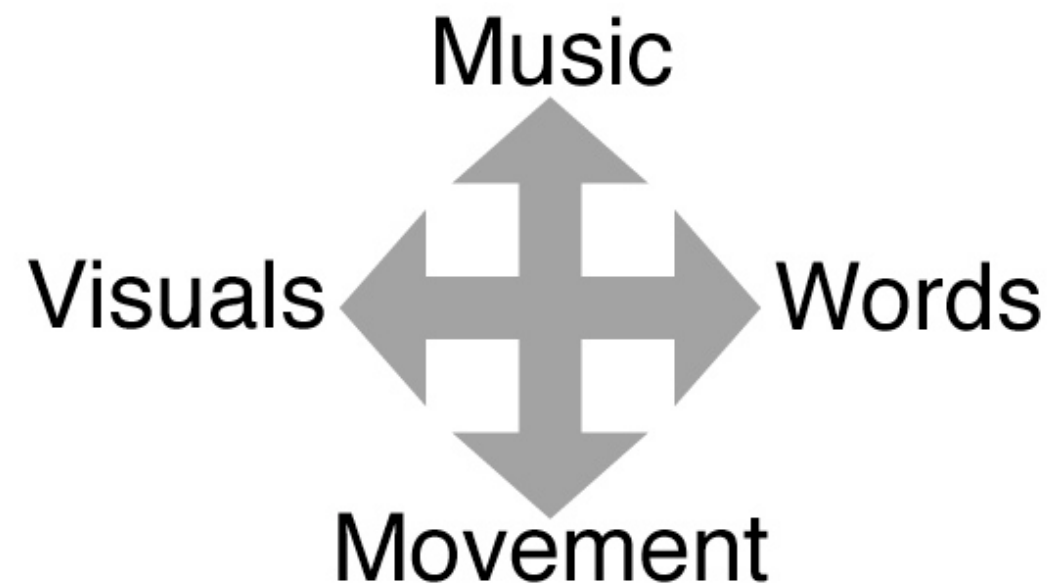
Sometimes, it's useful to have a strategy that helps you prioritize your time and stay on track. Ask yourself the following three questions: "What can I do to facilitate the goals of the group within the next minute?" "Within the scope of the session, what will the group be doing five minutes from now and how can I facilitate the process of getting there?" and "Where does the group need to be fifteen minutes from now?" Think of these questions as a way of "looking ahead" in order to keep your session on track and to make sure you use the time effectively. This type of planning becomes more important as you approach the close of your session to allow time for the final transition into the last activity and to close the session itself. Use the 1-5-15 strategy at any point during your session.

The Modality Interchange

When I was writing the Music Makers curriculum for the Boys and Girls Clubs of America, I wanted a way to remind staff that they can always get more out of a simple activity if they move it into another modality, or area of expression. The four main modality areas I discuss are music, movement, visual art, and the written word. Although we all have our orientations, there's certainly room for overlap - the poet thinks in words, but can also deliver a musical masterpiece. The dancer expresses through movement, yet can be both poetic and musical. The visual artist works with lines, dots, colors, textures, and shapes - the same language of the musician. The fact is, all "art forms" are different

aspects of the same art. We often forget this when visual art, drama, dance, music, and writing all get categorized, compartmentalized, and conceptualized in higher education and beyond.

When a child plays, she doesn't draw these same boundaries. Everything is on the table. It's all fair game, and she is master of them all. To remind us that all art is connected, I created this simple graphic. Commit it to memory, keep it in your pocket or make it into a sign that you place on the wall. Whatever helps you remember that music, movement, visual art, and words can all flow into each other, draw from one another and inspire one another.



Closing

When the End is Near

Every presenter has his/her own ways of closing the various types of sessions. Some closing experiences are quite short and “light,” such as setting aside a couple minutes for participants to offer a single word that sums up their experience. Others are more comprehensive, involving in-depth verbal processing time that allows each participant to talk about their thoughts and feelings as they relate to the session, as well as events outside the session. Depending on the purpose of your session, you will choose a final activity that best serves the goals of the individuals in your group. Allowing ample time for your closing is best facilitated by starting your transition at the right time.

When engaging in group discussion, or what is commonly called “verbal processing,” consider using established techniques that are designed to help participants share while maintaining a safe and

supportive environment. These include techniques such as probing (asking questions), restating (summarizing what someone said), clarifying (asking questions to verify meaning), giving feedback (describing how someone might appear to others), and summarizing (recalling events and stating them concisely). When asking questions, attempt to use “open” rather than “closed” questions. A “closed” question has a “yes” or “no” answer and begins with words such as: does, did, can, do, is, are, etc. An “open” question prompts the sharing of information & details, and often begins with words such as: how, when, what, why, who, etc.

Transitioning

A segue is defined as “a smooth transition,” which is why I prefer that term. It reminds me that it’s not just about moving from one activity or modality to another, it’s about making that process smooth and seamless. When considering how to segue into your closing activity, take note of how you would like your participants to be in relation to each other and to you. If your closing will be in a circle, find a way to shape the last activity so it ends with everyone in a circle. If you will end standing, make sure that you find a way for participants to clear space during the last activity. Use the 1-5-15 strategy to help create segues.

The closing of any session, even a short one, can create feelings of loss and separation for some people. Often, people form unique and meaningful bonds through music and movement that bring about feelings

of connection, joy, understanding, and happiness. When faced with the closing of a session, participants can feel as if these things they have created together are somehow threatened. Attend to the needs of your group by leaving ample time to integrate learning, reflection on the experience, and showing appreciation for all the gifts that communal music brings. Look for ways to cultivate positive feelings as the group prepares to depart. After all, elevating our mood, creating lasting friendships, and helping us to understand ourselves a bit better are all reasons we began playing music together in the first place. Good feelings are not ending because the session is over. They are brought to the forefront of our awareness, ready to be shared and cultivated.

Focus on the Feeling

I've said this before and I'll say it again: the thing that most people remember about a session is not the instruments they played or the specific activities, it's the feeling they have when it's over. The quality of our lives is directly proportional to the quality of our emotions. By focusing on the feeling of your closing session and allowing everyone to have their own experience, we can facilitate self-knowledge, intimacy and authenticity. Humans are social creatures. We crave quality interpersonal relationships where we feel free to express our authentic selves without judgment from others. Feelings are powerful and they are fragile. Consider ways you can create time and space for your participants to cultivate and express their feelings in

ways that are appropriate and productive. In the DCM approach, this is accomplished largely through focusing on appreciation.

Clean Up

After the closing, you and your participants will reset the space and put away instruments and other materials. I've found that most people jump at the chance to help with this task. Children (and most adults) love to help out so make sure you give them the chance! This time together can serve to soften any feelings of being "jolted" out of the kinds of intimate settings created through musical play and give people time to socialize. Be mindful as you lovingly put away your instruments. If you find a broken instrument, rather than focusing on the replacement cost, imagine the joy the person was expressing through the instrument to actually break it – Priceless.

Before you depart, give thanks for the space, give thanks for the people who provided the space, give thanks for the people who built or cleared the space, and offer your blessings to those who will come next.

Notes for You

Music Educators

As a music educator, your role is to help your students gain an understanding and appreciation for everything musical. Music students need to master the fundamentals of learning, listening, composing, improvising, and performing. As a master in community music, you know about the power of music to bring people together and create feelings of connectedness. You also know that learning and performing music is as much about achievement as it is about anything else. Students gain confidence when they gain knowledge and skills. They increase their self-esteem and confidence when they take risks and perform a solo or stand up and conduct the group, or even share their ideas with their peers. They form personal bonds when they work together, practice the music, and perform in front of an audience.

As you work through this material, you will search for ways to integrate the musical aspects of the activities with your goals as a music educator. You will know when something needs to be simplified or made more challenging. You will think of ways to transfer these activities into other forms of musical expression. You will seize opportunities to insert a familiar song or dance into these activities. And you will find ways to point out the musical lessons that are woven into the fibers of these experiences. [More about Music Education for Children.](#)

Music Therapists

As a music therapist, your aim is to help your clients reach their therapeutic goals and objectives, according to their treatment program. As you know, there are always multiple avenues that one can take to reach a goal or objective, and often, there are multiple goals that can be reached through a single experience. As you work through this material and practice these activities with your clients, you will find multiple opportunities to address their physical, cognitive, and social goals and objectives. While I have pointed out some of these along the way, your training and experience will reveal many more ways in which you can create appropriate and effective therapeutic settings and opportunities for your clients to make progress at any stage of their treatment.

Some of you will focus on the physical aspects (e.g., reaching, grasping, extending, bending, leaning, walking, touching, passing, etc.). Others will see

opportunities in the cognitive realm (e.g., identifying, naming, choosing, changing, sequencing, creating, etc.). Some of you will focus on the social aspects (e.g., leading, following, partnering, sharing, turn-taking, brain storming, discussing, evaluating, disclosing, etc.). As master musicians, you will also find ways to integrate songs and other musical material into these experiences to bring them to life and make them even more effective tools for your clients. [More about Music Therapy.](#)

Community Music Facilitators

As a music facilitator, you understand your role to be one of service – service to the community and service to each individual therein. As you work through these experiences, look for ways to hand over the reigns to your participants, empowering them to become a self-sufficient community driven by their collective impulses. Facilitation is all about making it easy for your participants to engage, express, and shine. You will find opportunities to call upon others to step up and share ideas.

One of the main goals of recreational music making is to have fun. With this in mind, rather than focusing on what participants are doing, focus on how they are doing it. Are they smiling, laughing, and at ease? If not, find opportunities to help participants relax and enjoy themselves through modeling and pointing out what works. You know it's not about teaching, but there are many lessons to be learned through simply participating and keeping one's eyes and ears open. It's

not about therapy, but some may find the experience to be therapeutic. Support everyone the best you are able. If in doubt, return to the music.

We all participate in recreational music making experiences for various reasons. Some enjoy the social aspects, while others like to focus on the music. Some might come to find themselves, while others might come to lose themselves. It's not up to the facilitator to dictate an agenda, only to support everyone and keep them (and the instruments) safe. Remember, you can't facilitate something that doesn't already exist! Listen, look, and see what is happening, then try to make the process enjoyable for everyone. It's pretty simple.

[More about Community Music Facilitation.](#)

Games

The following are examples of ways to present different activities and games. They are not the only ways to present them! Use these as starting points for further exploration and development. In general, challenge level increases as you move from the first to the last activity. As always, make changes along the way to accommodate your participants.





DCM

Music that Makes a Difference

To find out more about the Developmental Community Music (DCM) approach to community building and wellness through music, visit playsinglaugh.com.

Leadership courses and certification opportunities are offered each year. The DCM website features resources for community music facilitators, including online courses at **DCM University**.

DCM is currently used by music teachers, music therapists, community music facilitators, and wellness advocates of all kinds. Discover the DCM approach and get the most out all your musical experiences.



Thank you! DCM Course Participants

Rumble Ball

Materials

- A variety of drums and percussion instruments, i.e., bells, shakers, and blocks.
- A small rubber ball or similar. 8" playground balls work well.

Preparation

- Gather in a circle or semi-circle with instruments ready to play.

Process

This information is available on both the DVD and the iBook versions of DRUM FUN!

Mods

- Begin with voices before moving to the instruments. See the video for an example. This serves as an easy starting point and encourages vocalization.

- Use an 'invisible ball.' This strategy never fails to produce creativity and laughter. An imaginary ball has several advantages over a physical ball: it can be any size, it never accidentally bounces out of the circle, it can be tossed higher than the ceiling, and you always have it on hand.

Extensions

- Try two leaders, each with their own ball. Challenge leaders to coordinate their play.
- Combine this activity with Music Pads.

Notes

This activity can serve as an ice-breaker and/or pre-music making activity to warm up and have some fun. The fact that the main **conduction** tool is a ball makes leading a familiar modality for most people, unlike traditional conducting.

Leading this activity promotes the use and development of gross and fine motor skills as well as leadership.

Playing music that matches the movements of the ball sets the foundation for ensemble playing with a conductor and accompanying dance.

Flocks in Socks

Materials

- Space for movement.

Preparation

- Clear your space and set aside instruments (if you're using them). *I often recommend that people take off their shoes and even their socks if they feel comfortable. Why? When we wear shoes, the materials in the soles shield our feet from feeling all the sensations of walking, running, skipping, tip-toeing, etc. While this might be acceptable for daily activities, not feeling a strong connection to the ground can potentially mute our tactile experience, which, in many ways, helps us be in-the-moment and feel grounded.*

Process

This information is available on both the DVD and the iBook versions of DRUM FUN!

Mods

- Try this with voices only, movement only, or instruments only. This works really well in a drumming group and can improve active listening and attention in group music-making.

Extensions

- Expand the range of movement and challenge your participants with some simple play rules, such as, “Make each expression very different from the previous one,” or “Use all three levels: low, middle, and high.” You can also prompt each person to take a leadership role by asking everyone to take one, and only one, turn.

Notes

This experience is a great ice-breaker and a wonderful way to help a group make some safe connections with each other. When we imitate others, we send a message that, “I like what you’re doing.” When we take the lead, we can increase our self-confidence and take risks, which is a good thing!

Number Walk

Materials

- A hand-held, **two-tone** percussion instrument.
- A small stick, such as a **circle stick**.
- Space for movement.

Preparation

- Clear your space for movement, making sure there is room to move freely in all directions.

Process

This information is available on both the DVD and the iBook versions of DRUM FUN!

Mods

- Play two tones on a drum or use a tonal instrument for ear training, e.g., play a minor chord for walking alone and a major chord for walking with a partner.

Extensions

- Play a rhythm that has a ‘three-feel,’ such as a waltz rhythm. Participants may figure out that the music is asking them to walk in groups of three. See the DRUM FUN! DVD for an example.

Notes

This is a receptive musical experience with a social component. It makes a good ice-breaker activity and can lead to lots of smiles and laughter.

The ear-training aspects can be useful for identifying everything from changes in instruments, timbre, rhythm and tonality. The fact that this happens in a group puts participants in a safe environment where, even if they don’t hear the change, someone else will.

I Am the Drum!

Materials

- Body percussion and voices

Preparation

- Clear your space for movement.

Process

This information is available on both the DVD and the iBook versions of DRUM FUN!

Mods

- Try this activity using instruments or using only sounds with eyes closed.

Extensions

- Add the phrase “and I like to _____” after “I Am The DRUM!” then show and tell everyone what you like to do as they mimic you.

See **Flocks in Socks** for a version of this activity that doesn't use words.

Notes

This experience is great for helping people speak up and initiate action. It's also a great way to help a group of people feel connected. When we move like someone else, we get to experience what it might feel like to be them, or at least get a glimpse into their way of thinking. This can help promote feelings of empathy and understanding between peers.

Sound Toss

Materials

- Voices

Preparation

- Gather in a circle, standing or seated.

Process

This information is available on both the DVD and the iBook versions of DRUM FUN!

Mods

- Try this activity with movement only.
- Try this activity using facial expressions.

Extensions

- After a sound is “tossed” to someone, that person repeats (echoes) the sound, then creates a new sound as they send it to the next person.

Notes

This activity presents opportunities for self-expression as well as making interpersonal connections. Eye contact is essential in this activity, as it is in so much of our daily communication with others.

Drum Stories

Materials

- A variety of drums and percussion instruments, the more exotic, the better.

Preparation

- Arrange instruments in a way that allows participants to browse and choose one they wish to play. You might place them in a specific area, such as on a nearby table, or centrally located in the circle.
- Arrange the group into a circle or semi-circle.

Process

This information is available on both the DVD and the iBook versions of DRUM FUN!

Mods

- Provide a specific theme for stories, such as tools or houses.

- Invite participants to relate their story to a personal experience or something that happened in the past. This encourages goals of communication and sharing personal information.

Extensions

- Ask everyone to be able to explain what the instrument is and how it's played. Provide time for them to research and consult with each other and other resources to meet that goal.
- If working with a specific theme, such as houses, ask follow up questions, like, "Who lives in there?" or "Where did the former residents go?"
- Create a story that incorporates all the items. One approach to this is to tell the story in **Round Robin** fashion, where each person adds one piece of the story when it's their turn to speak.
- Have participants create drawings or other artwork about their item.
- Have pairs or small groups of participants use their items in a 'Theater Improv' style performance. Think of the TV show "Whose Line Is It Anyway?"
- Transition to a jam session.

Notes

This experience never fails to bring out the creative side of any group and get people laughing. I like this as a pre-musical experience to get the instruments into people's hands without the fear of 'not knowing what it is.' By allowing participants to define what the item is,

you empower them to take ownership and create a relationship with the instrument.

The public speaking aspect of this activity is another strong point. Taking risks is an important part of creating intimate and meaningful relationships. Being vulnerable has been shown to play an important role with regard to happiness and living a fulfilling life. Most people have a fear of public speaking and this activity can help them to overcome that fear and develop interpersonal relationships. Some people might not be strong musicians, but they may shine in this story telling experience.

I've had some surprisingly powerful results when using this activity with adults. Don't be fooled by its simplicity! This experience leaves space and time for people to relate to things they find important, often leading to discussions about deeper thoughts and feelings. Use this for first-time groups, as an ice-breaker, or for groups that meet regularly, to reach deeper into a particular process.

Sound Compass

Materials

- A variety of drums and percussion instruments.

Preparation

- Gather in a circle with instruments ready to play. Be sure to distribute instruments so there are no similar pieces next to one another. To facilitate this, place instruments at or under chairs before this game begins. Participants only have to pick up the provided instrument, and they're ready to begin.

Process

This information is available on both the DVD and the iBook versions of DRUM FUN!

Mods

- Substitute voices for instruments.
- Substitute pitched percussion or unique instruments for drums and percussion.

Extensions

- Place unique instruments at 90° arcs around the circle (i.e., like the four directions of a compass; North, South, East, and West.). Use the instruments as a guide to help the person in the center find his way.

Notes

This experience relies on a keen sense of hearing to reach the goal. This kind of focused listening helps with communication and concentration amidst busy environments. The 'risk taking factor' is also a big part of this experience. Volunteers are making themselves vulnerable in front of their peers, which has been shown to improve self-confidence, increase trust, and factor into feelings of satisfaction and happiness.

Day at the Museum

Materials

- A variety of instruments and extra-musical items, such as scarves, chairs, pillows, pads, and other items found in the environment.
- Audio player with music ready to play.

Preparation

- Set out instruments where participants will be able to choose from a wide variety quickly and without crowding one another.
- Have the music player cued up and ready to start.
- Gather in a semi-circle.

Process

This information is available on both the DVD and the iBook versions of DRUM FUN!

Mods

- Incorporate team members into the sculptures.
- Incorporate sound and music into the sculptures.

Extensions

- Before groups explain their works to each other, inform them that they will now be explaining another group's work! There might be some comments like, "But we don't know what it is!" Tell them "That's OK. You get to decide." Give groups a little time to create a presentation, based on another group's artwork. After sharing, let the creators of each piece present their work.
- Have groups present their works through song. Songs can include melody or be more in rap style. Give them extra time for this task. You might switch up works and have groups write a song about another group's artwork, which is usually hilarious.

Notes

This is an exercise in teamwork. Note that natural leaders emerge quickly in this setting. 'Observers' will need to take risks and show initiative, two important life skills. 'Natural leaders' may be challenged to find ways to provide space for others by giving up some control and encouraging whole-group collaboration.

I like this experience for its cooperative value and creative potential. Although it does not ask participants to create music together, it does provide time with the instruments and illustrates 'ensemble' concepts. Use it

as a pre or extra-musical experience to bring your participants closer together.

When providing or facilitating feedback, be mindful of judgmental comments, defensive comments, and cross-talk, and re-direct feedback as needed. Encourage participants to talk about their personal experiences, one at a time, until everyone has had an opportunity to share.

Where's Froggy?

Materials

- A variety of drums and percussion instruments, voices, body percussion, or a combination.
- A small wooden frog rasper.

Preparation

- Arrange the group in a circle or semi-circle, with their instruments ready. Have the frog rasper handy.

Process

This information is available on both the DVD and the iBook versions of DRUM FUN!

Mods

- Try having two seekers at the same time. They might start out working individually, but then figure out that, in order to get accurate and usable feedback

from the group, they need to work together (stick together).

Extensions

- Try having the group use a different element of music, rather than volume, to guide the seeker, e.g., pitch, timbre, or tempo.
- Try this with two Froggies, where the seekers hear two different instrument groups at the same time, one for each Froggy. Which Froggy will they find first? Can the group guide the seekers to stand next to one another, or directly between both Froggies?
- Try using one type of sound for horizontal and the other for vertical location.

Notes

This activity is useful as a pre-musical warm up. It teaches basic concepts, such as dynamics and relating one's playing to the actions of another. It's a safety-in-numbers exercise where everyone works together to create a group effect and it gets players intensely focused on the seeker. There's also the added anticipation of witnessing the 'hunt' for Froggy.

Children and adults like to play this game, as it's friendly, light-hearted, and serves as an easy entry point for group drumming and community music-making. Use it as an ice-breaker, energizer, or after formal music making as a way to relax and have fun.

Clapandele

Materials

- Body percussion

Preparation

- Arrange the group in a circle, either seated or standing.

Process

This information is available on both the DVD and the iBook versions of DRUM FUN!

Mods

- Begin this game by simply passing a sound (any sound) around the circle in a random fashion.
- You can challenge your participants to pass a sound to each person in the group without repeating anyone until everyone has received the sound. I then ask them if they can repeat the SAME order as they did

before. This means that each person passes it to the same person they did previously. After establishing the sequence and challenging them to do it quickly, I sometimes give my participants the “What will make it even easier to do this quickly?” question. In some cases, someone will say, “Arranging ourselves in order around the circle!” That’s a great solution! At this point, everyone will move into a new position.

- This activity works very well on drums and with other instruments. See DRUMANDELE on the Drum Fun! DVD for an example.

Extensions

- Try playing this game with different types of sounds, including vocals.
- Introduce the option to change the direction of the sound by saying a special word or making a specific gesture, e.g., saying “ah!” or turning back towards the person who passed the sound to you as you make your sound. I suggest that you create a play rule for redirecting the sound, which is that each person may change the direction once only. If you don’t have this rule, the sound can end up getting ‘stuck’ in one area of the circle while the rest of the group waits for their turn.

Notes

This is an excellent ice-breaker that is easy to understand and perform. The social component of passing something to your neighbor helps increase socialization and switching direction can produce some

fun and unexpected moments that often result in laughter. If you try this in rhythm, it can help develop a sense of timing and provide opportunities for improving hand-eye coordination.

Let's All _____!

Materials

- Body percussion

Preparation

- Gather in a standing circle. May also be seated.

Process

This information is available on both the DVD and the iBook versions of DRUM FUN!

Mods

- Use different types of vocal effects to enhance the delivery of the cue, (i.e., change the timbre of your voice).

Extensions

- Replace the verbal cue with a rhythmic cue on a specific body percussion sound. For example, if the cue is “[clap] our hands,” then the cue would be two claps in a row (in rhythm) to cue the clap on the word ‘hands.’ Similarly, two snaps cues ‘snap,’ and so on. Try this with eyes closed to enhance listening.

Notes

This experience focused on sound quality and rhythm. Leaders need to give clear commands and speak up, which helps develop presentation skills. Participants need to pay attention and react quickly, which enhances listening skills and prepares them for instrumental play.

Inviting suggestions never fails to produce smiles and laughter, as participants offer up creative ideas.

Changing up the tempo and dynamics of the cue poses challenges to both leaders and followers and prepares everyone to take initiative and be responsive to rapid changes.

Music Pads

Materials

- One to four different ‘pads’ or objects that can serve the same purpose, which is to provide a unique area on which to step or tap. Items that work well include carpet samples, mouse pads, and door mats. In the video, I use portable “child seats” in **DCM colors** (red, green, blue, and yellow).
- A variety of drums and percussion instruments.

Preparation

- Clear your space for movement and arrange your group in a standing or seated circle.

Process

This information is available on both the DVD and the iBook versions of DRUM FUN!

Mods

- Perform with voices or body percussion, and then introduce instrumental sounds.

Extensions

- Invite two, three, or even four different leaders to play at the same time. Encourage leaders to work together to coordinate their conducting to produce music that fits together.

Notes

This is a wonderful activity to get people moving and take a leadership role. Participants who take the leader role are challenged to make clear, concise movements and gestures, which helps develop gross and fine motor skills, timing, motor planning, as well as having the potential to build self-confidence. The group makes music as a whole, which reinforces unity and working together.

Let's All Play!

Materials

- A variety of drums and percussion instruments for the participants.
- A block or bell for the leader.

Preparation

- Gather in a circle or semi-circle and have the instruments ready to play. Play 'Let's All ____!' as a preparatory experience.

Process

This information is available on both the DVD and the iBook versions of DRUM FUN!

Mods

- Use a homogenous instrument set or tuned percussion.

- Try this in a standing circle then invite everyone to spread out in the space. Participants might choose to move around while they play this game.

Extensions

- After experimenting with Let's All Play Our ____, All Play Our ____, and Play Our ____, change the cue to this:
- "Let's all play our drum because it's so much **fun!**" The rhythm is: ta-ti ta-ti ta-ti ta-ti ta ta ta.
- Invite participants to play their instrument on the word "fun!"
- Play the cue at different tempi and dynamics.
- Explain that you will be removing some of the end of the cue, so participants will need to finish it in their "mind's ear." In other words, they won't hear the entire phrase, but it remains the same length.
- Play a few examples as the participants play on the word 'fun.'
- Invite everyone to close their eyes, so they focus on listening rather than looking. Suggest that they not make any sounds that might give away where the final note comes. Play a few more cues while everyone has their eyes closed. Slow it way down and shorten it to make it more challenging.

Notes

This experience focuses on timing, planning, listening, responding, and audition (creating and 'hearing' sounds in one's mind).

Leading this activity presents opportunities for developing initiative, musicality, and building self-confidence. Because responses are always synchronized, the group may develop feelings of unity and peer support.

Drum Call

Materials

- A variety of drums and percussion instruments.

Preparation

- Arrange in a circle or semi-circle. Make sure everyone can be seen and heard.

Process

This information is available on both the DVD and the iBook versions of DRUM FUN!

Mods

- Suggest that people use different languages and sign language to give their cues.
- Slow down the tempo to facilitate success, then speed up as the group is able.

Extensions

- Try using one language at a time to learn how to count to four in various languages. Ask your participants to volunteer their native language. Make a list of all the different languages spoken.
- Add the numbers 5, 6, 7, and 8.

Notes

This is a solid leadership activity that provides specific opportunities for participants to bring out their ‘teacher voices’ and have an impact. The structure provides opportunities for the unexpected, which usually prompts smiles and laughter. Even bobbles and rough spots are acknowledged with giggles, as leaders call out different numbers in different ways.

I like this activity because it gives the ‘followers’ in the group a way to speak up in a controlled way. No one has to take too much risk or come up with something on their own. They can choose from a short ‘menu’ of options. That being said, there’s usually someone who will call out “five million!,” which give everyone an excuse to go crazy and rumble to their heart’s content!

Timbre!

Materials

- A variety of drums and percussion instruments in four **timbre** groups; drums, bells & metal, blocks, and shakers & scrapers.

Preparation

- Gather in a circle or semi-circle, seated or standing.

Process

This information is available on both the DVD and the iBook versions of DRUM FUN!

Mods

- Use pitched instruments or vocables in place of percussion instruments.
- Use different types of one instrumental category. For example; use all drums, but divide them into four categories; high, mid, low, and bass.

- Use vocals, divided into SATB (soprano, alto, tenor, bass) groups.

Extensions

- Play longer phrases (12 or 16 beats) and see if the group can meet the challenge.
- Try different meters, such as 3/4 or 12/8, to give the music a different feel and challenge leaders.

Notes

This is a learning experience that demonstrates the difference between various categories of sounds and instruments. It provides opportunities for leadership and challenges the group to work as a team, producing a musical product that is clearly made up of several different subgroups.

I find that groups are often capable of reproducing fairly complex musical phrases and that they are surprised, in a good way, when they do. These successes can contribute to group cohesion and overall feelings of unity and peer support.

The leadership opportunities are valuable self-teaching moments, as leaders often quickly find their weak spots and immediately work on improving their conducting skills.

Pieces of Eight

Materials

- A variety of drums and percussion instruments, voices, body percussion, or other instruments.

Preparation

- Arrange the group where everyone can hear and see everyone else. A circle, semi-circle, or similar configuration works well.
- Ask participants to choose an instrument (or sound) that makes a single note. Sounds can be long or short, high or low, but the main quality is that they have a sudden start and decay fairly quickly.

Process

This information is available on both the DVD and the iBook versions of DRUM FUN!

Mods

- Begin with voices or body percussion, then move to instruments.
- Play to phrases of various lengths, such as four or six (See the DRUM FUN! DVD for an example). Playing to four can serve as a gentle first step before adding more numbers. I recommend this as a starting point for young or inexperienced players.

Extensions

- If using instruments, invite participants to add a vocal sound along with their instrumental sound. Vocal sounds may imitate instruments or be something completely different. You might choose a theme, such as ‘animals’ or ‘city sounds’ and see what happens. At one point, you may ask participants to only use their voices for a period of time.
- Add gestures and/or movements to sounds. Encourage participants to expand their movements by saying something like “Make it bigger!” or “Use your entire body!”
- If space allows, have participants move into subgroups of the same number. Number ones find all the other ones and so on. Once in groups, invite participants to come up with a unified sound, gesture, or movement. Ask groups to arrange themselves into a circle where they are in a sequence from one to eight, moving around the circle like a clock. Intensify the experience by prompting more volume, increasing the tempo, or asking participants to, “Do more of what you’re doing!”

- Invite participants to play on more than one number, adding a second or even a third. Invite them to see if someone is playing on BOTH their numbers and who else shares each of theirs. (If their numbers are 3 and 6, who else is on 3? Who is on 6? Is anyone on both 3 and 6?)

Notes

This experience has great potential to teach musical skills like timing and phrasing. It's also a simple way to teach ensemble playing, as each participant must do his/her part to create the musical effect of a functioning rhythm pattern. The intermusical qualities help promote interpersonal connections, as participants look and listen to discover who else is 'on my number.'

I often invite participants to describe the music that is produced by asking questions like "What did that remind you of?" or "What do you think would be happening if that was a movie soundtrack?" Questions about the music often lead to discussions about personal experiences and beliefs that in turn can promote quality personal interactions and strengthen community bonds.

Signals

Materials

- A variety of instruments or vocals/body percussion.

Preparation

- Arrange the group in a circle or semi-circle.

Process

This information is available on both the DVD and the iBook versions of DRUM FUN!

Mods

- Provide leaders with something to hold in each hand, such as a stick, mallet or sign. This makes it easier for the participants to see the notation. You might even use different colors or shades to represent the different beats in the phrase.
- Have leaders use legs and feet, rather than arms and hands. Invite other variations for leading.

- I suggest having the leaders give a little hand cue on their beat. This helps those who are following the notation to stay on track.

Extensions

- Add more leaders to create longer notation segments, such as 3 or 4 notes. Remind leaders to change less frequently so as to not confuse those who are reading the notation. You might make it a play rule to only change after holding your notation for three or four cycles.
- Stand on pads (as in **Music Pads**) to cue different combinations of beats to be played. For example, two feet on a pad = two notes played per beat, one foot on = one note played, and no feet on = resting (feeling the beat, but not playing).

Notes

Creating on-the-spot notation is a form of conduction that provides leadership opportunities. It's a way to build compositional skills and get immediate feedback based on one's actions. Having more than one leader provides opportunities for collaboration and sharing. Participants gain music-reading experience without having to know anything about traditional notation. This form of 'people notation' also keeps participants looking at each other rather than down at a printed page.

Rhythm Canon

Materials

- Body percussion

Preparation

- Arrange the group in a standing circle.

Process

This information is available on both the DVD and the iBook versions of DRUM FUN!

Mods

- Use vocables or instrument sounds in place of body percussion.

Extensions

- Shorten or lengthen the phrase to make it more, or less, challenging.

- Add other types of sounds, gestures, and movements.
- Create longer, more complex movements, in rhythm. Be sure to learn the phrase as a group before performing it 'in canon.'

Notes

This is a wonderful way to illustrate basic rhythmic relationships (1:1, 2:1, 4:1 and 1/2:1). It's also a good way to familiarize participants with the four basic body percussion sounds that are common to many activities and pieces of music.

For those who are not familiar with the canon form, this experience can provide a nice surprise moment, as the music they were learning as a group suddenly comes to life through this simple yet powerful form of arranging the musical phrases.

This activity has the potential to lead to discussions about other canonic pieces and provides opportunities for leadership and teamwork, as subgroups must work to play as one unit while the groups around them are playing something different. This skill of maintaining focused on a task while the world poses potential distractions, can be an important life quality when it comes to things like completing homework, practicing a musical instrument, or finishing a project.

Let's All Move!

Materials

- Space to stand in a circle, plus a little bit more.
- At least one instrument for keeping a steady pattern that can be heard by the group. Drums or other percussion instruments work well.

Preparation

- Arrange everyone in a standing circle.
- Advise your participants that this experience involves moving and could get intense at times. Give anyone who might wish to sit-out the chance to make that choice.
- Anyone sitting out can play music for the group. If no one wishes to sit out, ask for a volunteer to play a drum or provide a basic beat for the group. Use the rhythm from “Let’s all play our drum because it’s so much fun!”

Process

This information is available on both the DVD and the iBook versions of DRUM FUN!

Mods

- Use a different, new or familiar, rhythm as the foundation for movement. If everyone wishes to participate in moving, use recorded music with a steady repetitive rhythm to ground and structure the activity.

Extension

- Increase the challenge by spreading out to make the circle bigger. More distance means participants must use more energy to get from their spot to someone else’s. Encourage or require that all participants step to the rhythm as they move. Consider introducing different styles of movement, such as crouching low or walking tall. Varieties of movement can increase physical exertion and expand one’s movement ‘pallet.’

Notes

This activity encourages musical as well as spatial and physical development. Participants are tasked to plan their moves based on the tempo and the distance they choose to travel. Musically speaking, this experience helps people develop a sense of timing and phrasing, which is essential in musical performance. Participants are interacting with each others, making this a great ice-breaker or community-builder. The

randomness and unpredictability promotes surprise, which often gives rise to laughter and can help people become more flexible and open (going with the flow).

Ships in the Night

Materials

- A number of unique instruments equal to half the number of participants. Instruments should be such that it is easy to play a single note (sound) while walking (e.g., a bell, block, or rattle).
- Space for movement free from clutter and obstacles.

Preparation

- Set instruments out where they will be easy to access. A side table or basket are both good choices.
- Gather your group so you can address everyone together.

Process

This information is available on both the DVD and the iBook versions of DRUM FUN!

Mods

- Use voices or tonal instruments, rather than unpitched percussion. Reduce challenge by reducing to total number of ships that sail at one time.

Extensions

- For an added challenge, use tuned percussion, such as tone chimes, tuned percussion tubes, or similar instruments. In this case, each pair will have a different 'scale degree,' which means that 'ships' will need to be able to tell the difference between the root, the fifth, and the third of the scale, for example.

Notes

This experience can be challenging on several levels. On a listening level, ships must tune into the sound of their buoy and not get distracted (focused listening). On an interpersonal level, there are opportunities for building trust and keeping others safe. On a musical level, there are opportunities to familiarize one's self with many unique instruments. And from a management perspective, navigators have lots of opportunities to coordinate movements, avoid problems, and see both the small and big picture at the same time.

Orbits

Materials

- A variety of drums and percussion instruments, body percussion, voices, or combination.

Preparation

- Arrange the group into a circle with instruments ready.

Process

This information is available on both the DVD and the iBook versions of DRUM FUN!

Mods

- Play with vocals, body percussion, and movement, in addition to instruments.

Extensions

- Introduce combinations of sounds, such as a drum hit followed by a word or gesture.
- Increase the tempo.
- Create a way for participants to reverse the direction of the orbit, such as using a special sound or gesture. Can sounds move in both directions? What happens when they meet at a single person?

Notes

This activity poses listening and playing challenges. Players must first hear the pattern clearly, which means they must also play it clearly for one another. They must also reproduce the pattern accurately, which is sometimes more challenging than it might seem.

This activity provides opportunities for focused listening, leadership, followership and group cohesion (keeping the pulse throughout).

Echoes

Materials

- A variety of drums and percussion instruments, body percussion, vocal percussion, or a combination.
- A bell or block for leader.

Preparation

- Gather your group in a circle or semi-circle with instruments ready to play.

Process

This information is available on both the DVD and the iBook versions of DRUM FUN!

Mods

- Try this with movement.
- Try this with voices, with or without movement.

Extensions

- Divide the group in two halves where each half is using a unique combination of instruments (e.g., drums vs. everything else, or high vs. low sounds).
- Identify the groups as group 1 and 2. Explain that you will play a series of rhythms (A, B, C, etc.). Group 1 will echo in ‘canon echo’ mode and group 2 will echo group 1. The result will be three rhythms playing at a given time. For example, the leader is playing rhythm C, group 1 is playing rhythm B, and group 2 is playing rhythm A. This relationship and pattern continues until the leader stops playing and the groups follow.

Leader A	Leader B	Leader C
	Group 1 A	Group 1 B
		Group 2 A

If this looks complicated, don’t worry. It’s a lot easier to just play it out. Keep in mind that this is a fairly challenging extension and may not be appropriate for all groups.

Notes

This experience challenges participants to exercise focused listening and concentration. I’ve found that most groups will out perform their own expectations, which is a good lesson for us all!

Use this activity for the musically nimble and allow time for those who need it to find their own way of relating to the rhythms.

Four on the Floor

Materials

- One drum or percussion instrument for each participant. The more variety, the better.

Preparation

- Arrange the group in a circle, ready to play. This activity may be done standing or sitting.

Process

This information is available on both the DVD and the iBook versions of DRUM FUN!

Mods

- To make it easy for players to know when they are to start and stop, ask the group to say the person's name who is to come in, right before they are to enter (on beat 3 or 4).

- Have the group play phrases of various lengths (8, 16, 32 beats).
- Create *Play Rules* for what people do when they enter, such as soloing or keeping the steady beat.
- Give everyone who is not playing something fun to do, such as playing a body percussion pattern, singing a song, or dancing.

Extensions

- Experience this game through progressive modalities of expression, such as beginning with movement, then through instruments, then through voices.
- Keep instruments in the middle of the circle to allow those who are not currently playing to change instruments if they wish.
- If you pre-set instruments around the circle in groups of “drum, block, shaker, and bell,” you can have everyone in the group synchronize with the rhythms of any sub-group, creating cohesiveness across the entire group. You can also plan for the last group to end up with “drum, block, shaker, and bell” then invite everyone else to synchronize with the instrument that best matches their own. This extension can serve as a segue to another activity.

Notes

Use this activity to illustrate the importance of active listening when playing with others. This experience also teaches patience and impulse control as participants are asked to wait until their turn to play.

This experience illustrates just how different the various sub-groups of four can sound. It also showcases each instrument in the group, providing time for everyone to actively listen to each one. The rhythms people choose to play also effect the feeling of the music, which will vary as the groups change.

Musical Mystery

Materials

- Sheets of thick paper
- One unique instrument for each participant.

Preparation

- On card stock or thick paper, draw or print four instrument images per sheet until you have all instruments that you will be using represented.
- Cut the sheets into “jigsaw” pieces with one instrument shown per piece. Make sure to cut pieces into different shapes. Make sure the shapes are very different from one another. (See example photos)

Option: Write a word or short phrase on the back of each piece of sheet of paper before you cut it up. These can serve as themes for each ensemble.

Process

1. Handout or let participants choose one piece of ‘jigsaw’ paper each.
2. Explain that they will be looking for the other pieces that fit with theirs. (This is why they all have to be unique shapes.)
3. Once they find all their “missing pieces,” each group will find the corresponding instruments and gather in an ensemble.
4. Groups will have a specific amount of time to compose a piece of music. Groups may choose themes or use the ones from the back of each puzzle.
5. When ready (5-10 minutes), groups perform for each other. You might set aside time for each group to discuss their theme and talk about their instruments.

Mods

- Make it easy to put the “jigsaw” sheets back together by marking the corner pieces with a small dot.

Extension

- Record each group’s performance and use the music to inspire another experience, such as movement or art making.
- Have each ensemble be prepared to tell the ‘audience’ about each of the instruments in their ensemble (name, origin, basic techniques).

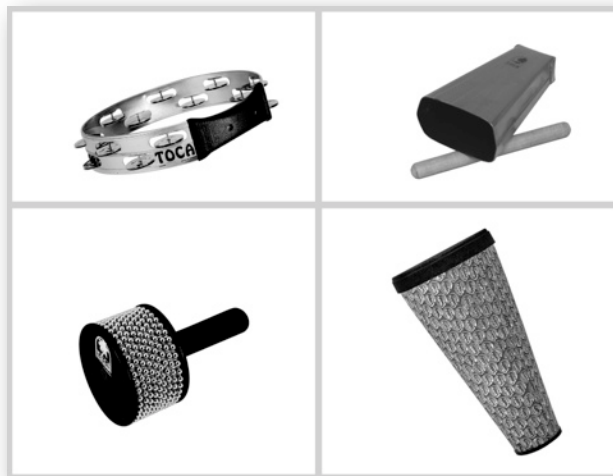
- Invite audience members to comment on each ensemble's music. What did it remind you of? What do you think the theme was about?

Notes

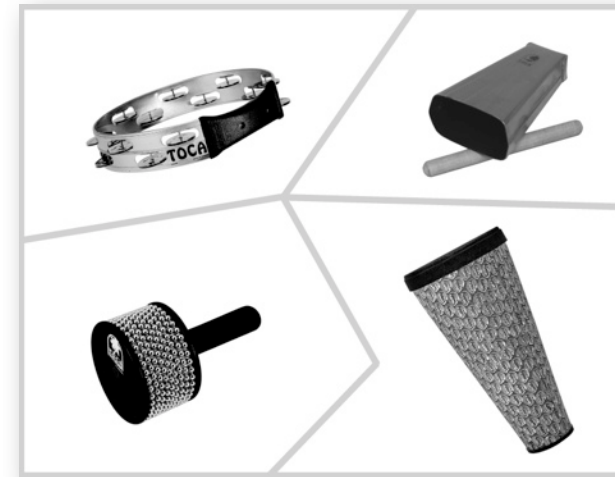
Use this activity to reach educative goals, such as learning about the different instruments and composing music.

Use this activity as a team building exercise to explore working together to complete a task within a specific amount of time.

Discuss what it was like to have to find one's ensemble members, form a group, and compose music as a team. How did each person function in the group? (leader, follower, partner).



Similar Shapes.
Hard to Match.



Unique Shapes.
Easy to Match.

Afterword



Anything we accomplish,

we do so with the help of others.

Acknowledgments

My heartfelt thanks and gratitude goes out to the following people for their contributions to this work. I imagine that most of them have no idea of their effect on this endeavor. Many of my experiences with them may have lasted for only for a few minutes, at a conference or even through something they wrote online. I do believe that everything we do, we are able to do because of the help of others—even if those ‘others’ are not aware of their impact and even if their role was to plant a seed. We are all reflecting each other’s light, shaping and redirecting it as we go.

Jessica Baron (*Where’s Froggy?*)

Randy Crafton (*Pieces of Eight*)

Kalani Das (*Rumble Ball, Day at the Museum, Signals*)

Doug Goodkin (*4-Part Rhythm Canon*)

James Harding (*Drum Stories, Flocks in Socks*)

Wolfgang Hartmann (*Clapandele, Music Pads*)

Arthur Hull (*Sound Compass*)

Paolo Knill (*Ships in the Night*)

Sofia Lopez-Ibor (*Sound Pass, Number Walk*)

Verena Maschat (*Let’s All Play - Movement Extension*)

Jim Oshinsky (*Four on the Floor*)

Andreas Osterhaus (*I Am The Drum!*)

Konnie Saliba (*Timbre!, Echos*)

Matt Savage (*Orbits, Let’s All Play Our Drum!, Drum Call*)

Special thanks to DCM 2012 course participants:

Lilly Aycud

Melanie Campbell

Leo Chau

Christopher Condon

Jim Copeman

Pradhana Fuchs

Michel Hardbarger

Ute Iaconis

Jeremy Lambshead

Bill Lewis

Teck Kwang Loh

Sam Marroquin

Margaret McClearn

Anyra McRae and Leahy

Chris Powers

Shauna Sedola

Mike Veny

Video Production

Produced by Kalani Das

Camera by Rick Ward

Audio and Video Editing by Kalani Das

Recorded at The Holy Spirit Retreat Center Encino, CA

Mics provided by Audio-Technica USA

Design and Editing

Cover Design by Sergio Urrea

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Kalani Das is a musician, teacher and speaker. He is a board-certified music therapist, professional percussionist, and certified **Orff-Schulwerk** music educator. As a performing and recording artist, he has worked with music legends Rod Stewart, Kenny Loggins, Barry Manilow, Max Roach, John Mayall, Yanni, Benise, Suzanne Cianni, and appears on numerous soundtracks for both TV and Film.

Kalani has published **numerous works** in video, audio and authored more than ten books. He is the founder of the **Developmental Community Music approach**, co-author and trainer of the **Music Therapy Drumming** curriculum, creator of the **Hula for Life** wellness program for older adults, and Director of Training for **ProRhythms**, a community-based wellness program.

His work in music therapy includes adults in addiction recovery, persons with TBI, and adults with

developmental disabilities. Kalani's spiritual teachings and podcasts may be enjoyed at kalanidas.com and the iTunes library. Friend Kalani on **Facebook** and follow him on **Twitter**.



BPM

Beats per minute, also sometimes represented as M.M., which stands for “Malzel’s Metronome,” named after the inventor, Johann Nepomuk Malzel. Today, M.M. is often interpreted as “Metronome Marking.”

Related Glossary Terms

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Buoys

A floating device that serves many different purposes. ‘Sea Mark’ buoys aids pilotage by marking a maritime channel, hazard and administrative area to allow boats and ships to navigate safely. The term is related to the word Buoyancy.

Related Glossary Terms

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Conduction

Extemporaneous conducting, often done as an in-the-moment response to a need for the organization of musical elements or as a creative expression of the person(s) conducting.

Related Glossary Terms

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Find Term

Chapter 2 - Rumble Ball

DCM Approach

Developmental Community Music is a holistic approach to designing and facilitating community music experiences. DCM is based on the core values of inclusion, cooperation, and appreciation. for more about DCM, visit playsinglaugh.com

Related Glossary Terms

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DCM colors

In the Developmental Community Music approach, the primary colors of red, blue, green, and yellow are used to represent various sub-groups, including the four main timbre groups of drums, bells, wood sounds, and shakers, respectively.

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Drum Circle

An informal music-based gathering where participants co-create music extemporaneously, often using hand drums and percussion instruments.

Related Glossary Terms

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Chapter 1 - Forward

Music Therapist

A credentialed individual who helps clients reach therapeutic goals and objectives through participation in music-based experiences. For more about music therapy, visit musictherapy.org.

Related Glossary Terms

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Find Term

Orff-Schulwerk

A holistic approach to music and movement education created by Austrian composer Carl Orff and his colleague Gunild Keetman that combines music, movement, drama, and speech into lessons that emulate a child's world of play. Also called the Orff Approach or simply Music for Children.

Related Glossary Terms

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Chapter 3 - About the Author

Round Robin

A term used to describe any activity in which participants take individual turns in a circular order. It was originally used to describe a document signed in a circle by multiple parties to make it more difficult to determine the order in which it was signed, thus preventing a ringleader from being identified.

Related Glossary Terms

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Timbre

Also known as tone color or tone quality, timbre is a general term for the distinguishable characteristics of a tone, aside from pitch, volume and shape (envelope). Timbre is mainly determined by the harmonic content of a sound and often described in both visual and physical terminology, such as bright, dark, hollow, thin, muted, sharp, etc.

Related Glossary Terms

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Find Term

Chapter 2 - Timbre!

Traditional Drumming

Music making, primarily on drums and percussion instruments, that is informed by a codified and historical system, often including specific instrumentation, techniques, rhythm patterns, forms, educational procedures, performance practices, and customs.

Related Glossary Terms

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Chapter 1 - Forward

Two-tone

An instrument featuring two distinct playing areas, each of which creates a unique tone, most often differentiated by pitch, but sometimes by duration, timbre, or other musical elements.

Related Glossary Terms

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Chapter 2 - Number Walk